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SELL THEIR SOULS TO SATAN

**How Sorcery Is Practiced Today in France on a
Scale Comparable to the Middle Ages—Charlatans
Breeding Crime by Recourse to Ancient Forms
of Black Magic and Witchcraft**

By R. S. Fendrick.
Paris.

Imagine in this enlightened day a man or woman entering into a pact with "the prince of darkness," executing a contract in which he deeds over his soul to "the evil one" in return for a prize boon—a fortune in gold, a place in the sun, the heart of an adored one! Yet such things are actually taking place in France, where an esteemed member of the bar in Paris lately has conducted extensive research in the subject of demons, witches and the black arts.

"The first step for a beginner in sorcery and black magic is to sign a contract with the devil," Maitre Maurice Garcon told me.

"We have many ancient examples of these pacts in old French legal documents. The modern ones I have seen are simply copies. They were written and signed in blood, of course. Their most striking characteristic is the bad faith shown by the sorcerer. He seems to figure that Satan is a liar par excellence and that he need have no scruple in trying to trick him. The substance of these contracts is that the human sorcerer agrees to sell his soul to the evil one in return for worldly riches, power or something else he desires. At his death the magic-worker agrees to hands over his soul to Belial, and the latter possesses it for eternity. But invariably the writer puts a joker into the contract in an attempt to escape paying his part of the bargain."

Maitre Garcon is a distinguished French lawyer who specializes in legal cases where black magic is involved. In order to familiarize himself with all these occult practices he has collected a library of more than 5,000 volumes in French and Latin

on the subject of the devil, many of these books dating back a thousand years or more.

Sorcery, witchcraft and black magic are not merely superstitions that have come down from ancient times. They are practiced on a considerable scale in France today. Hardly a week passes but what a case comes up in the courts of some old hag making a neighbor's milk turn sour, throwing an evil spell on cattle or bringing misfortune on some family. These lawsuits are not only confined to backward districts. A pastry cook of the Parisian suburb of Fontenay-sous-Bois is now prosecuting a neighbor for making his cream turn sour in midwinter! In some cases these magic spells have led to tragic results.

After the enforced departure, some months ago, of Aleister Crowley, known in Paris as the "High Priest of Black Magic," frequent cases of devil worship have come to the attention of French police. The most popular rendezvous of these votaries of Satan is said to be in Fountainbleau Forest, some fifty miles from Paris, where on dark, moonless nights mystic rites are started as a clock in a distant village strikes 12.

Although these ceremonies take place in different parts of the country, it is said they are carried out in much the same manner. A circle is drawn, in which those invoking Satan's aid gather on their knees after making cabalistic signs on the ground before them. Then bowls of incense are generally lighted, and the leader, standing before a candle-lit altar, invokes the evil spirits.

In Paris itself it is alleged that huge conclaves are held, but most discreetly, and only the initiated are permitted to attend the rites. The police, however, are on the watch to see that none of these ceremonies includes human sacrifices.

During his stay in Paris, Aleister Crowley, who is revered in certain circles as "The Master Therian," gathered about him a large following. Since his departure his books on black magic have continued to be popular. The teachings which he sets forth in his books are regarded with the reverence of religious precepts by his fellow followers.